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PMC names CEO

Stephens to take reins June 1

POCATELLO — Norman Stephens, who will take over as chief executive officer of Portneuf Medical Center on June 1, said Tuesday that he's excited about the challenges that lie ahead. "(PMC) has all the elements for success. I am thrilled to be coming out there," said Stephens, speaking from Palmer, Alaska, where he has been CEO of Mat-Su Regional Medical Center since 2004.

Stephens will take PMC's helm from the hospital's interim CEO, Steven Blaine, who took on the duties Feb. 1 after longtime CEO Pat Hermanson resigned to pursue doctoral studies.

Stephens steps into the leadership role of a hospital that has just undergone a privatization process after voters approved the dissolution of the county-owned entity. PMC is now owned by the Community Benefit Organization, a joint venture between Plano, Texas-based Legacy Hospital Partners and Portneuf Health Care Foundation.

"We are positive that Norman is the right fit for Portneuf," said Mark Buckalew, chairman of Portneuf Health Care Foundation. "He has a proven track record of 16 years as a CEO in the health care industry."

As PMC prepares to ramp up the consolidation of its two campuses at its Hospital Way location, Stephens brings the necessary experience running hospital systems and has also twice been part of the construction of a new facility, including his latest position in Alaska.

He said building a new facility is a huge undertaking but one he is eager to be immersed in. "You have no idea how fun it can actually be," he said. "It's complicated and hard, but it's really a lot of fun."

But more than concerns for bricks and mortar, Stephens said he is ultimately focused on who will be working within its walls. "The building is just a building. It doesn't solve all of your problems," he said. "The hospital is the people. The important thing is to make sure you have folks who are engaged in the process of making sure their department works well." One of the keys to that process, Stephens said, is employees who see things "from the patient's perspective."

"Norman is an exceptional leader and has a proven track record of success in improving patient, employee and physician satisfaction," said Gary Hill, Legacy Division President. "Norman understands how important it is that we provide the best possible clinical care for the communities we serve."

Aside from his excitement for the new challenges he will face at PMC, Stephens is also looking forward to some of the personal enjoyment the relocation will bring. In Palmer, where he said temperatures can hover at 20 degrees below zero for weeks at a time, there just isn't the opportunity for him and his wife to enjoy their horses. He's also an avid hunter and fisherman who is looking forward to trying his hand at bagging some of Idaho's most popular game. He also likes what the Gate City has to offer.

"It's just about the right sized town for me," Stephens said. "I don't much enjoy big cities and traffic. But, Pocatello is still large enough, that it has everything I need."